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OTHER MATTERS

Gender mainstreaming in drug policies and programmes and eradicating poverty

Note by the Secretariat

1. At its 1997 coordination segment, the Economic and Social Council adopted agreed conclusions 1997/2 on mainstreaming the gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system. In a letter dated 5 December 1997 (see annex), the President of the Council conveyed those agreed conclusions to the Chairman of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs at its fortieth session. The President noted that the Council had called upon all its functional commissions and subsidiary bodies to mainstream a gender perspective in their work and decided to monitor annually progress in that respect. In that connection, he drew attention to the fifth and ninth paragraphs of section II.A of the agreed conclusions, which read as follows:

> "The Council calls upon all its functional commissions and subsidiary bodies to mainstream a gender perspective in their work, and in this regard:
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> "(a) To adopt, as a first step, an explicit decision on mainstreaming a gender perspective in their work;
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> "(b) To make maximum use of the agreed conclusions of the Commission on the Status of Women on the 12 critical areas of concern when monitoring implementation of global conferences with regard to related topics at the national and international levels;

*E/CN.7/1998/1.

"(c) To take into account the work of the Commission on the Status of Women and the Commission on Human Rights in the area of enjoyment of human rights by women."

"Under an item entitled Integrated follow-up of major United Nations conferences, the Council will monitor annually the way in which its functional commissions and subsidiary bodies mainstream a gender perspective on the basis of the report on the follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women."

2. In his letter of 5 December 1997, the President of the Economic and Social Council also drew attention to the agreed conclusions of the high-level segment of the Council on fostering an enabling environment for development in relation to the agreed conclusions of the Council in 1996 on poverty eradication. He further drew attention to Council resolution 1997/60, in which, *inter alia*, the Council called on all relevant functional Commissions to implement fully the recommendations contained in the agreed conclusions of 1996.

3. The Secretary-General is required to submit a report to the Economic and Social Council at its substantive session of 1998 on the implementation of the agreed conclusions. Any action taken by the Commission to implement the relevant agreed conclusions should be included in that report.

4. In view of the foregoing, the Commission may wish to identify appropriate action to implement the relevant agreed conclusions.

5. Information on action taken by the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) in mainstreaming a gender perspective into its policies and programmes is given below, as well as information on the issue of poverty.

6. To assist the Commission in its consideration of appropriate action, the complete texts of the agreed conclusions and of Economic and Social Council resolution 1997/60 will be before the Commission in all the official languages of the United Nations (E/CN.7/1998/CRP.4).

I. GENDER MAINSTREAMING IN DRUG POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES

7. In 1992 and 1993, UNDCP, the Division for the Advancement of Women of the United Nations Secretariat and the World Health Organization (WHO) collaborated on a global project to ascertain the scope of the drug problem among men and women. Applying rapid assessment methodologies, data was collected from 27 countries. The previously hidden dynamic of gender issues in drug cultivation, manufacturing, trafficking and consumption was uncovered and documented for the first time at the international level. The results showed, among other things, that while both women and men engaged in drug-related activities, men controlled most of the profit and power and women were used mostly as labourers in the cultivation and manufacturing process and as mules in trafficking. Women, like men, consumed drugs illegally, but hid their consumption more than men did because of greater social disapproval. Access to drug treatment and treatment facilities was more readily available to men than to women. Furthermore, women drug abusers who were pregnant or infected with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) suffered even more discrimination, often receiving no treatment at all.

8. The research findings were reflected, together with contributions from other United Nations agencies, in a United Nations system position paper on women and drugs, which was endorsed by the members of the Ad Hoc Inter-agency Meeting on Coordination in Matters of International Drug Abuse Control of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC). This led to their inclusion in the report of the Secretary-General to the Commission on the Status of Women at its thirty-eighth session, in March 1994, under the priority theme "Development: women in urban areas: population, nutrition and health factors for women in

development, including migration, drug consumption and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome" (E/CN.6/1994/3).

9. In 1994, UNDCP designated "Women, drug abuse and drug control" as the theme for the observance of the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, drawing attention to the problems of women in relation to drug abuse and the interplay of gender issues in drug cultivation, manufacturing, trafficking and consumption. In July 1994, the Office of the Executive Director of UNDCP appointed a Focal Point on Women in UNDCP to deal with all technical and policy aspects of drug issues from a gender perspective. Furthermore, in January 1995, UNDCP presented a seminar on the gender dimension in drug control to inform staff of the gender issues relevant to drug control. In February 1995, a working group on gender-related issues was formed, comprising representatives from each section of UNDCP, to begin examining ways in which to integrate a gender perspective into the drug control work.

10. In addition to providing technical inputs in the field of drugs to strengthen the Platform for Action adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women, held at Beijing in September 1995, UNDCP sponsored and organized jointly with the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute, the NGO Committee on the Status of Women and the NGO Committee on Narcotic Drugs, a special event on women and substance abuse during the Conference for Governments, non-governmental organizations, United Nations bodies and academic institutions.

11. As a follow-up to the Beijing Conference, a number of activities were carried out by UNDCP. A special issue on gender and drug abuse of the *Bulletin on Narcotics*, published in June 1996, announced an international research award competition sponsored jointly by UNDCP and WHO. In July 1997, UNDCP organized a public seminar to present the award-winning research papers from Africa, Latin America and Europe.

12. As part of the proposed system-wide medium-term plan for the advancement of women, 1996-2001, the ACC Subcommittee on Drug Control included "Women and drug abuse: a gender perspective" as a theme in the United Nations System-Wide Action Plan on Drug Abuse Control. A review of the System-Wide Action Plan in December 1997 demonstrated achievements in several key areas, such as the inclusion of sex-dissaggregated data analysis in rapid assessments, integrating a gender perspective in UNDCP-organized demand reduction forums, and the inclusion of a gender dimension in several UNDCP-funded alternative development projects. Furthermore, pursuant to Economic and Social Council agreed conclusions 1997/2, UNDCP offices in the field and at headquarters have jointly prepared a programme advisory note on mainstreaming the gender perspective in its policies and programmes, which is currently under review.

II. POVERTY ERADICATION

13. There are clear linkages between poverty and drug abuse, as there are between poverty alleviation and drug control. Especially with regard to fostering an enabling environment for sustainable development in conflict and post-conflict situations, drug-related issues need to be taken into account from the start if reconstruction, rehabilitation and sustainable development efforts are to be successful.

14. The connections between drug control and poverty are particularly clear in areas of illicit cultivation of crops from which narcotic drugs are derived, as these tend to be remote rural areas below the average income level of the country. In such areas, alternative development is applied for the benefit of small-scale traditional growers as a process to reduce, eliminate and prevent production of illicit crops through specifically designed rural development measures in the context of sustained national economic growth. In this connection, the Commission's attention is drawn to the proposed elaboration of an international strategy to eliminate the illicit cultivation of coca and opium poppy (strategy for coca and opium poppy elimination (SCOPE)).

15. Illicit cultivation takes place in a limited number of countries and regions, and is directly linked to rural poverty. In areas of extreme poverty, the illicit crop fulfils the basic need for cash in notoriously cash-strapped subsistence economies. To change agricultural techniques and income structures, off-farm income-generating activities are often part of alternative development projects. The reduction of rural poverty, particularly through sustainable natural resource management, is therefore an inherent result of successful alternative development interventions.

16. There are also linkages on the demand side, as poverty breeds drug abuse and addiction breeds poverty. Similarly, poverty is instrumental in the involvement of individuals, often drug abusers, in illicit, street-level trafficking. The reduction of poverty and the concomitant building of a sustainable, enabling environment for human well-being thus inherently reduce the risk of drug abuse.

17. The Commission has consistently recognized the interrelationship between the drug abuse problem and socio-economic development and has encouraged Governments to adopt a holistic approach in addressing drug control. The application of poverty eradication as a methodology to address drug problems is thus appropriate and in some cases essential. This can only be achieved if Governments take full account of drug-related issues in pursuing their broader socio-economic planning.

18. Furthermore, in endorsing the 1995 decision of ACC to encourage all parts of the United Nations system "to identify, on a systematic basis, aspects of their respective programmes with potential major implications for drug abuse control issues" (ACC/1995/4, paragraph 6), the Commission encouraged integrated responses by the system to drug problems in connection with responses to other cross-cutting phenomena, such as poverty. This approach is particularly important with regard to those programmes and agencies addressing problems not only of rural poverty but also of urban poverty, street children and other economically disadvantaged groups.

19. In a climate of growing collaboration within the United Nations system and the consequent consolidation of activities, a number of issues can be addressed simultaneously. Prime examples of this are the integration of a drug control component into the promotion of community-based development for poverty reduction in Kyrgyzstan under the auspices of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the mobilization of various agencies to expand their own mandated activities to UNDCP alternative development project areas in Viet Nam and the Lao People's Democratic Republic. Similarly, in the Baalbeck-Hermel area of Lebanon, UNDCP, together with UNDP and non-governmental organizations, seeks to sustain the non-cultivation of illicit crops by improving the socio-economic situation and enhancing local capacities to provide basic services, especially in the health and education sectors. In its future strategy for Africa, UNDCP will also take into consideration the relationship between the drug problem and poverty, as well as Africa's vulnerability to drug abuse and trafficking and in this context will not only launch programmes but will join other ongoing poverty alleviation programmes as well.

Annex

LETTER DATED 5 DECEMBER 1997 FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL ADDRESSED TO THE CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMISSION ON NARCOTIC DRUGS AT ITS FORTIETH SESSION

I am writing to you to seek your active cooperation and support in implementing a number of recommendations adopted by the Economic and Social Council at its coordination and high-level segments in 1997 which require the attention and action of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs.

I should like to transmit to you the agreed conclusions adopted by the Council on 18 July 1997 on mainstreaming the gender perspective into all policies and programmes in the United Nations system. The Council called upon all its functional commissions and subsidiary bodies to mainstream a gender perspective in their work (section II.A, fifth paragraph), and decided to monitor annually progress in this respect (section II.A, ninth paragraph). The Council also provided a definition (section I.A) and principles (section I.B) for gender mainstreaming.

As the Secretariat will prepare a report to the Council in 1998 on the implementation of these agreed conclusions, I should be grateful if you would keep me, or the Chairperson of the Commission on the Status of Women, informed of steps taken by the Commission on Narcotic Drugs for implementing these recommendations, and of any obstacle or difficulty encountered in that process.

I should also like to convey to you the agreed conclusions adopted by the high-level segment of the Council entitled "Fostering an enabling environment for development: financial flows, including capital flows, investment and trade". The Council decided, in 1996, that it would discuss issues of the enabling environment for development, and that commissions should focus their consideration of those issues on aspects that fall within their respective areas of competence (agreed conclusions 1996/1 on the coordination of United Nations system activities for poverty eradication.)

Finally, I should also like to transmit herewith the text of a resolution on eradication of poverty (resolution 1997/60), adopted by the Council on 25 July 1997. The Council reaffirmed that it would continue to provide overall guidance and oversee system-wide coordination in the implementation of its agreed conclusions 1996/1 on the eradication of poverty by all organizations of the United Nations system.

In forwarding this resolution, I wish to draw your attention, in particular, to paragraph 4, in which the Council welcomed the steps already taken by functional commissions, in particular the Commission for Social Development and the Commission on the Status of Women, to implement the recommendations of the Council on the coordination of the multi-year programmes of the functional commissions related to poverty eradication, and called upon all relevant functional commissions to fully implement the recommendations contained in its agreed conclusions 1996/1. I should be most grateful if necessary steps could be taken to achieve this end.

In connection with the above-mentioned issues, may I suggest that consideration be given to having a standing agenda item on the follow-up to the agreed conclusions of the Council's high-level and coordination segments, and to its resolutions, as part of the agenda of your Commission.

(*Signed*) Vladimir GALUSKA